Maine NRCS Conservation News

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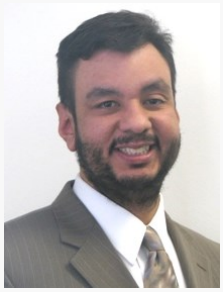
A Note from the State Conservationist



Happy Holidays to one and all! I hope you had a great holiday with family and friends and wish you all a healthy, happy and successful 2014.

As we enter into the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2014, I would like to update you on the 2014 Budget and the new Farm Bill:

Budget

On December 26 President Obama signed into law a two-year budget bill (H.J. Res. 29) that will avoid another government shutdown in January 2014 and ease sequestration rates for some federal agencies. The law includes various agriculture sector-related provisions, including the following:

- It authorizes the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to collect fees of up to $150 per conservation plan to cover some of the costs of providing technical assistance for a producer or landowner. The agriculture secretary can waive fees for assistance provided to members of historically underserved groups, such as beginning farmers or ranchers, limited resource farmers or ranchers, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

Please be advised that similar "fee for service" language has been included and authorized in prior year budgets, but it has never been implemented.

Farm Bill

The Senate recessed on December 20 without passing an extension. As of right now, a Farm Bill Conference Report is now likely to slip into late January.

As details are still being finalized up on the Hill, NRCS continues to move forward with programs signups. I appreciate everyone's dedication and hard work in carrying out the tasks and meeting the deadlines that allow us to meet our financial and technical assistance and administrative goals. THANK YOU!

—Juan C. Hernandez

Program Delivery Outcomes—FY 2013

The following is a summary of Maine NRCS programs dollar obligations during Fiscal Year 2013. We appreciate the dedication and hard work of Maine NRCS employees, partners and producers in making conservation of natural resources on Maine's landscape a priority.

Agricultural Management Assistance Program: (AMA)	Large Irrigation Systems: 5 contracts for $341,788 Small Irrigation Systems: 11 contracts for $111,437
Conservation Security Program (CSP) (2002 Farm Bill era)	Annual payments made on 27 contracts for a total of $82,452
Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP) (2008 Farm Bill era)	11 contracts for $79,883 (This program only obligates funds for one year at a time). Annual payment on 126 prior year CStP contract for a total of $609,785.
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	759 contracts for $9,936,106 • General EQIP: 105 contracts for $3,603,926 • Organic: Total = 93 contracts for $952,946, of which: > Certified: 33 contracts for $530,659 > Transition: 60 contracts for $422,287 (of which 41 are CAPs for $74,970*) • Seasonal High Tunnel: 124 contracts for $1,001,324 • On-Farm Energy: Total = 26 contracts for $62,665, of which 23 are Headquarter or Landscape CAPs* for $56,912) • Forestry: Total = 329 contracts for $2,385,071, of which: > New England/New York Forestry Initiative: 70 contracts for $2,012,415 > CAPs*: 259 for $372,656 • Other CAPS: Total = 56 contracts for $335,668, of which: > 41 Conservation Nutrient Management Plans for $296,613 > 3 Nutrient Management Plans for $6,144 > 10 Fish and Wildlife Plans for $28,209 > 2 Pollinator Plans for $4,702 • Water Conservation (Irrigation): 10 contracts for $910,464 • National Water Quality: 13 contracts for $502,766 • State Conservation Innovation Grants: 3 agreements for $181,276

Pre-commercial Thinning—Before

Pre-commercial Thinning—After

* Conservation Activity Plans

Program Delivery Outcomes (continued)

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)	7 landowners accepted easement offerings for $1,152,915 on a total of 507 acres through agreements with 4 land trusts. One landowner deferred.
Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)	5 properties were evaluated with only one determined as eligible. Offer was made, but declined by the landowners.
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)	WHIP General: 4 applications for $242,282 Working Lands for Wildlife/ New England Cottontail: 4 contracts for $139,640

Program Deadlines—Fiscal Year 2014

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) deadlines for FY 2014 have passed, with the General EQIP deadline of July 1, 2013 and EQIP Initiatives deadline of December 20, 2013. January 17 is the deadline for the Agricultural Management Assistance Program and **February 1** is the deadline for the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program. The application deadline for the Conservation Stewardship Program has been extended to **February 7, 2014**.

The EQIP Seasonal High Tunnel and New England/New York Forestry Initiatives that we have utilized in the last few years will no longer be funded as National Initiatives. However, Maine NRCS has set aside Forestry and Seasonal High Tunnel statewide funding categories for 2014.

Maine Civil Rights Committee Members for Fiscal Year 2014

Members:

Amanda Burton, Co-Chair, NRCS
Mary Anne Coffin, Co-Chair, FSA
Cindy Green, NRCS
Debra Gray, NRCS
Amanda May, FSA
Michael Dennison, FSA

Advisors:

Brian Vigue, NRCS
Elaine Tremble, NRCS
Ken Gustin, FSA

Special Emphasis Program Managers:

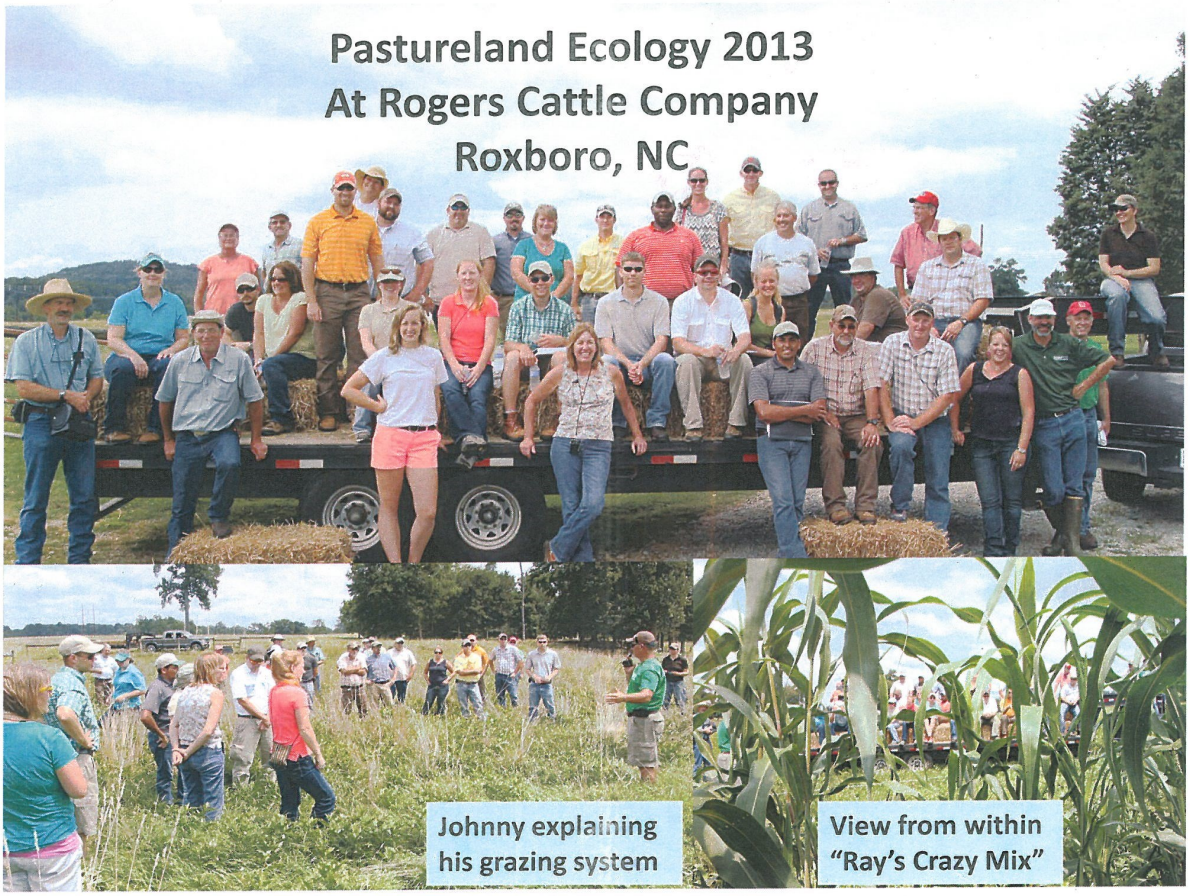
Chris Jones, Multicultural Emphasis Program Manager, NRCS
Helena Swiatek, Federal Women's Program Manager, NRCS
Stephanie Landry, Disability Contact, NRCS

Leadership:

Juan Hernandez, State Conservationist, NRCS
Donovan Todd, State Director, FSA

Pasture Ecology Training Benefits Maine NRCSers

- by Anna Donahue, DC, South Paris

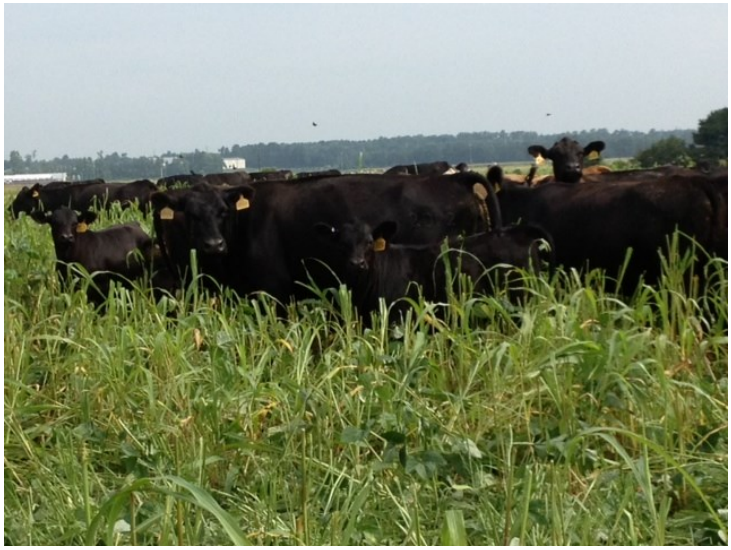


For two weeks this past summer, four field personnel from Maine left our busy offices and nice weather behind, and flew to Raleigh, NC for Pasture Ecology training. The group included Jade Gianforte, Paul Carmichael, Eric Giberson, and myself. We braved the hot, sticky weather and overabundance of good Southern food, and in return, learned a great deal about pasture ecosystems. We will be spreading the good news about pasture management to our customers throughout the state.

This training was held at NCSU, NC State University's Ag Research Service Beef Educational Unit. Here, they raise herds of Herefords and Angus, and study pasture management, and other projects current at the University. They have approximately 110 acres of pasture, and 60 brood cows. We also studied horses, goats, and sheep, at other nearby research farms. The excellent pasture management at the horse farm amazed me.

The staff at the farm kept us well fed, drove us around in vans, and even gave us suggestions for entertainment and dining. Working in groups, we demonstrated what we learned with the research herds. My group had eight beef cows, and we practiced evaluating their pasture and adjusting fencing to change their allocation at different time intervals. See photo on next page.

Pasture Ecology Training Benefits Maine NRCSers (continued)



Some of their pasture plants were similar to ours, but most of what we saw growing in July was warm-season grasses. The most prevalent ones were Bermuda grass, crabgrass, and sorghum-Sudan grass. We discussed plant growth, pasture condition scoring, and soil biology. It was amazing to see large beef cows grazing in lush grass that grew higher than their backs.

Our instructors were a mix of Professors, Extension specialists, graduate students, and only two NRCS employees, Ray Archuleta and Steve Woodruff, from the ENTC. We also had an economics professor who led a hands-on lesson in the costs of pasture vs. hay. He had developed great worksheets that were simple for everybody to use. This was very interesting, and anyone can access this assistance on-line. The website is: www.ag-econ.ncsu.edu/extension/forage-budgets, and there you can choose the printed worksheets, or a spreadsheet to automatically calculate.

Other hands-on lessons included electric fence troubleshooting and dung beetle experiments. We took field trips to different areas of the state, and to bison and beef farms whose operators were very successful with pasture-based production.

We also visited the Center for Environmental Farming Systems, which is a partnership between NCSU, NC Ag and Technical State University, and the NC Department of Ag. This was an impressive operation housed on a former state mental hospital campus. We saw trials of agroforestry, pasture-based swine finishing, and even a Cow Vacuum to remove flies from cows as they enter the milking parlor.

I know that everybody involved will be able to work with producers in their home state to help them improve their grazing. Even though we are envious of NC's long growing season and loamy coastal plain soils, we can apply what we learned about the balance between plant growth and livestock feed to Maine. We are all very grateful to Maine leadership for sending us to this valuable training.

Not Just Perched and Blocked Culverts Prevent Fish Passage—by Ben Naumann, Fisheries Biologist

It is widely known that fish need to move; this is because they cannot find everything they need to survive and reproduce in one location. Fish need large connected areas of habitat with essential elements to thrive including foraging, spawning, nursery and cold water refuge areas. When important habitat is blocked or fragmented — individual fish will suffer, can have negative effects on a population's genetic structure (e.g., selection for smaller fish), and populations can be severely reduced or even extirpated. One major source of the blocking or fragmentation of habitat is road stream crossings (culverts).

Throughout Maine it is estimated that 25 to 40 percent of a watershed is impaired due to improperly sized or installed culverts. When we think of culverts acting as fish passage barriers we immediately think of the culvert as being perched or blocked. Even though perched and blocked culverts make up a high percentage of the culvert barriers on the landscape there are many other ways culverts are blocking fish to upstream habitats. Culvert issues involving velocity, low flow, temperature or a combination are sometimes overlooked as barriers to fish; each of these lesser known barriers to fish are discussed below.

Velocity Barriers: When a culvert is too small for a stream, water flows faster at the culvert outlet. For example, if you turn on a hose and place your thumb over the end you can control the water velocity by how much you cover the end of the hose. The more you cover the hose the more the water velocity increases (i.e. the more undersized the culvert the more water velocity increases). Usually undersized culverts are also perched because the increased water velocity scours out the substrate below the culvert. Even if a fish was able to get into the culvert, there is a good chance that the fish would be too exhausted to travel the whole length of the culvert without any chance to rest. In lab studies researchers have found a four inch brook trout has a burst speed of 3.1ft per second for ten seconds. This means if a culvert has a velocity of 3.1 feet per second and the culvert is over 30 feet long it is likely the fish will not be able to pass. It is common to find stream velocities naturally of 3.1ft per second but not for 30 feet at a time. Natural stream bottoms are diverse with rocks and wood that influence changes in water velocity creating resting places for fish, unlike most conventional culverts.

Low Flow Barriers: When we look at culverts like the one pictured on the right it's easy to think the culvert is not a fish barrier because of its size. During high spring and fall flows

(continued on page 7)

Fish Passage (continued)

this culvert is probably not a fish barrier. However, during the summer months in low flow conditions when fish are seeking cold water refuge upstream to escape rising mainstem river temperatures, this culvert becomes a barrier. In a round or elliptical culvert there is no low flow channel; water disperses over the bottom and is too shallow for fish to swim. A natural stream channel has a low flow channel allowing fish to commonly navigate up and down stream during summer flows.

Thermal Barriers: Thermal dams are formed when a culvert is set too high, is greatly undersized, and/or debris continually blocks it, creating a deadwater upstream. The picture above shows a deadwater created by a culvert affecting stream function by changing the natural flow of the stream, increasing water temperature because the water is not moving and shade cover is gone because the backed up water has killed the trees. Fine sediments are settling out in the deadwater, covering any type of stream bottom which also increases water temperature because the sediments are dark in color. This water heats up in the summer months creating a wall of warm water or "thermal dam". Fish will stop feeding and can die when water temperature increases above a certain species threshold. Thermal dams are often overlooked as a fish passage barrier because at first glance it looks as if there is no passage issue at the culvert itself.

Conclusion: There are thousands of culverts on the Maine landscape with the above-mentioned types of fish barriers. For a stream and its inhabitants to function naturally and to be healthy, barriers to passage need to be identified and stream connectivity re-established. For more information on how NRCS might be able to provide assistance to private landowners to remove fish passage barriers and enhance stream health, please contact your local NRCS Service Center.

Note: Information and photos used in this article were adapted from "Stream Smart" workshop presentations. Stream smart workshops are a partnership effort spearheaded by Maine Audubon to reach professionals, communities and landowners responsible for road stream crossings. They provide the best information currently available about why and how to install culverts that pass aquatic organisms and natural stream processes while maintaining a safe road stream crossing infrastructure and meeting the landowner's needs.

Keep it covered, please!

If you're trying to make your soil healthier, you shouldn't see it very often. In other words, soil should always be covered by growing plants, their residues, or a combination of the two.

Keeping the soil covered all the time makes perfect sense when you realize that healthy soils are full of life and that the microorganisms living in the soil have the same needs as other living creatures. They need food and cover to survive.

When you have a vegetative cover on the soil, especially a living cover, you offer those microbes both food and shelter. Some scientists say when you till the soil and remove crop residues, the effects are as devastating to soil microbes as a combination of an earthquake, hurricane, tornado, and forest fire would be to humans.

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Keep it covered, please! (continued)

From the perspective of the living creatures within the soil, a tillage tool like a chisel shank has the effect of ripping the ground like an earthquake; removing residue is like a tornado ripping the roof off a house; uncovered soil can be drenched and whisked away by gushing water and wind like that of a hurricane — or scorched in the hot sun like an out-of-control fire.

To learn more about soil health, and to meet some of the farmers who are "Unlocking the Secrets in the Soil," visit www.nrcs.usda.gov.

Free Farm Safety Stickers Available

Farmers have the seventh most-dangerous job in America

- by Lani Carlson, Project Coordinator, Maine AgrAbility Program, UMCE

Annually, there are 26.2 work-related fatalities per 100,000 full-time farmers, according to *Business Insider*. Of the 268 farm deaths in 2011, 54 percent were transportation related.

Many Maine farmers and farm workers are operating farm tractors in fields and on roads. To promote workplace safety, the Maine AgrAbility Program of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, in partnership with Goodwill Industries of Northern New England and Alpha One, developed a brightly colored decal to be applied to tractor fenders, dashboards and windshields. The decal reminds operators to work safely.

University of Maine Cooperative Extension's AgrAbility Program will give as many as five free safety stickers to each farm in Maine. To order, contact Maine AgrAbility Coordinator Lani Carlson at maine.agrability@maine.edu or call 207-944-1533.

Maine AgrAbility is an outreach program for farmers and farm workers with disabilities or chronic illnesses to help them keep farming. Maine AgrAbility is sponsored by UMaine Extension in collaboration with Alpha One and Goodwill Industries of Northern New England. More information about Maine AgrAbility is online (umaine.edu/agrability).

A Look at a Cattle Ranch in Winter

- by Alice Begin, Resource Conservationist

Snow in the foreground has been disturbed by cows grazing the forage beneath.

A trip to Ben Hartwell's Sebago Lake Ranch by NRCS Staff members Dan Baumert, David Chiappetta and Alice Begin in mid-December gave them the opportunity to see Ben's cattle grazing through several inches of snow. Forage was "stockpiled" - left unharvested or grazed after the hay was removed in July—and added into the pasture rotation after the summer-grazed pastures were finished for the year.

Cows on snow-covered stockpiled forage waiting to be turned onto new ground in background.

The stockpiled fields were a mixed Orchardgrass stand. Cows paw through the snow to graze. Animals were happy and in great condition, waiting to be let onto the next piece of stockpiled ground. When the fields are done, or snow gets too deep, the cattle will be moved to a wintering area on pasture, where they will "graze" on large round bales of hay and haylage.

Ben is the outgoing Vice President of the Maine Grass Farmers Network, the owner/manager of Sebago Lake Ranch, as well as "Ben Fencin" fence installation company. He has worked with NRCS to develop and implement parts of his excellent rotational grazing system, including fencing and watering. Ben has also worked with the agency to develop a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) to address his sacrifice area where the cows live during mud season.

Updated Web Soil Survey Available

The latest version of the Web Soil Survey (3.0) was launched by NRCS in late summer 2013 and can be accessed at http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/.

The web-based application provides anyone with computer access a wealth of free soils information along with soil maps, properties and interpretations aimed at helping with land use decisions.

Notable changes to the Web Soil Survey include improved map appearance, increased Area of Interest acreage and upgraded options for changing map properties to include: soil boundary color; soil boundary thickness; soil label size and background image shading. To make things even better for the viewer, Web Soil Survey is now online 24 hours a day with no downtime.

2013 Reading the Farm—Women's Sustainable Agriculture

- by Helena Swiatek, Federal Women's Program Manager

Many know that small farms in Maine are growing. What many don't know is that a great number of these farms are owned and operated by women. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, of the 8,136 farms in Maine, 2,043...or 25 percent...are women-owned.

The University of Maine Cooperative Extension recently held a Sustainable Agriculture Retreat focused on Maine women farmers called "2013 Maine Reading the Farm". The workshop's purpose was to bring together agricultural service providers with a range of expertise to enhance their ability to help individual farmers. Attendees included representatives of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry; Extension; the Maine Women's Agricultural Network; Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association; the University of Vermont; Cultivating Communities; Maine Farmland Trust; two Soil and Water Conservation Districts; and NRCS. The group was tasked with identifying some of the unique aspects or challenges that women farmers face. They also toured several women-run operations including Springdale Farm, South Paw Farm and Cornerstone Farm.

From these visits and from surveys conducted online through Extension, the following challenges were identified: (Keep in mind these are generalities found through these visits and the UMCE surveys, and that there are many exceptions to the rule).

- Compared with men, women in agriculture tend to lean toward smaller farms focused on more value-added products.
- Some women farmers tend to be adverse to risk and lack confidence, particularly those that are starting out.
- Some women farmers indicated that they were lacking in technical/mechanical skills and therefore have been late to mechanize. As Hanne Tierney of Cornerstone farm put it: "I don't have to teach my male apprentices how to use a hammer, but the girls I do." Carrie and Holly Whitcomb of Springdale Farm mentioned how they opted to hire a custom hay operator so they didn't have to deal with the management of labor and know-how with the machinery.

Tips for working with Women Farmers:

- Remember to ask who is involved in the operation and remember to include partners as much as feasible.
- In conversations, check for understanding and tone down the technical speaking as necessary to assure that information is successfully conveyed both ways.
- Follow-up with clients to see if they have any questions or need particular assistance to move forward.
- Remember that a lack of technical skill will require more hand holding or create more expense if the project is hired out.
- Be careful not to overload clients who are not familiar with our process or with the technical aspects of the work with too many projects at the beginning. Don't set clients up to fail.

These findings can impact the work of NRCS and our work with female clients in differing degrees. The following tips can help our work with not only female but all clients:

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2013 Reading the Farm—continued

- When working with our clients, it is important that we assess a person's understanding of what we are presenting. We can do this by checking for understanding by asking lots of questions and avoiding the use of acronyms.
- Secondly, due to a lower comfort or skill level with technology, some producers are more likely to hire contractors to implement structural practices. This will increase the expense for the farm in comparison with producers who can do more of the work themselves. Conversely, if they do opt to do the project themselves, it may require more "hand-holding" and time investment from the field office.
- It is also easy to inadvertently overwhelm the small farm producers with projects that they cannot handle. NRCS staff needs to be careful to warn participants that just because the money is there, it doesn't mean it is wise to take on many projects at once (such as four construction projects in one year with a first time participant).
- Finally, it was noted by all participants of the workshop how important it is to keep the process farmer-lead, no matter what service was being offered and who the participant is (male or female). Let the farmer talk, listen, ask lots of questions, and repeat back what you heard to check for your own understanding. Every farmer has his/her unique challenges and we should remember to adjust to their needs in order to better serve them.

Mary Perry of Winterberry Farm explains her farming operation to the group. Photo courtesy of Tori Jackson, UMCE.

New Logo for NRCS

To support the one-USDA concept and to make it easier for citizens to recognize all USDA services and products, USDA agencies have transitioned to using the USDA logo as the primary logo throughout the Department.

Successful Farmer Workshops to be Held

The Androscoggin Valley SWCD will be hosting five Successful Farmer workshops in 2014. If you know of producers who have been looking for new strategies for their farm, you may want to inform them of these workshops.

Workshops and Dates:

- Vegetable and Dairy Crop Management—6-9 p.m. on January 28
- Soil Health and Nutrient Management—6-9 p.m. on February 4
- Pest Management for Fruit and Vegetables—6-9 p.m. on February 11
- Transitioning to and Organic Production—6-9 p.m. on February 18
- Irrigation for Field and High Tunnel Production—9 a.m.-3 p.m. on May 6

For more information and/or to register for one or more sessions, please contact Jane at 207-753-9400 ext. 400 or visit www.androscogginswcd.org.

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Knox-Lincoln Awards Banquet Recognizes Conservation Leaders—by Hildy Ellis, Knox-Lincoln SWCD

The North Nobleboro Community Building was the setting for the Knox-Lincoln SWCD Annual Awards Banquet in November 2013. In addition to dinner, the evening included highlights of conservation education and practices in Knox and Lincoln counties, presentation of conservation awards, and guest speaker Bill Eldridge, CEO of Maine's Own Organic Milk Company (MOOMilk).

The District thanked and recognized the following individuals for their contributions while a slideshow of their achievements provided a backdrop:

- **Knox-Lincoln Cooperator of the Year** - Reba Richardson and Bill Pluecker of Hatchet Cove Farm, a MOFGA-certified organic family farm in Warren, were recognized as the 2013 Cooperator of the Year. Reba and Bill, in their 10th year of farming, have six acres of land in diversified vegetable production and distribute fresh, healthy vegetables through summer and fall CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture programs) and local coops. Bill and Reba have worked to reduce soil erosion and protect water quality on their 110-acre farm with NRCS funding and technical assistance for two projects: the installation of drainage and culverts to prevent the driveway from channeling run-off from the fields, the installation of a heavy use area adjacent to the barn, which allows them to manage nutrients and compost manure from their five cows and other livestock.

- **Soil Health** – Jan Goranson and Rob Johanson of Goranson Farm in Dresden were honored with the Soil Health award for their efforts in employing natural soil-building practices to "grow" nitrogen, instead of buying in and applying amendments. Jan and Rob have 60 acres under cultivation, 30 acres in diversified organic vegetable crops and 30 acres in soil-building rotation cover crops and green manures. Rob has been experimenting with zone tillage - a form of modified tillage in which only narrow strips are tilled, leaving soil in between the rows untilled – since 2007 and commented that he would never go back to plowing. Goranson Farm was recognized as Knox-Lincoln Cooperator of the Year in 2004.

- **On-Farm Energy Efficiency** – Nancy Williams and Al Maloney of NEWAIM Farm in Waldoboro breed and sell California Variegated Mutant Romeldale sheep, and operate NEWAIM Fiber Mill, which specializes in custom processing of raw fiber into roving and yarn. They were recognized for installing photovoltaic and solar hot water systems that supply all of the electricity and 2/3 of the propane to operate the fiber mill. The PV system, with a payback of 7 years, reduced carbon emissions from electricity generation by 132,000 lbs in 2013 alone!

Knox-Lincoln Awards Banquet Recognizes Conservation Leaders (continued)

- **Logger of the Year –** Henry Oliver of Nobleboro received this year's forestry award. Henry was recognized for his careful and professional timber harvesting practices, which help to conserve wildlife, soil, water, and other forest resources while at the same time helping woodland owners achieve management goals. Whether working on his own or with a forester, Henry's work exemplifies keen attention to natural resources, whether by selecting trees or preventing erosion and sedimentation.

- **Knox-Lincoln Conservation Teacher of the Year –** Madelon Kelly of Washington has been a math, biology, chemistry, physics, and environmental and marine science teacher for more than 20 years. She coaches the gold-level MathCounts coach team at Medomak Middle School and, three years ago, she initiated and now leads a Science Olympiad Team. This spring that team won the state championship and raised money to travel and compete at the nationals in Ohio. Maddy is the kind of teacher who arrives early, leaves late, looks for the good in all of her students and works to prepare them for success providing them with as many opportunities as possible.

- **District Volunteer of the Year –** Jessica Sewall of Round Pond was recognized for her contribution of more than 120 volunteer hours to the District through a summer internship that was a requirement of her degree in Environmental Science from the University of Southern Maine. Jessica assisted District staff at their plant sale, designed plant ID signs for the District's new Pollinator Garden, learned about erosion and sediment control by accompanying staff on site evaluations and a Lake Smart training, and spent many thankless hours on database updates. She did all of this with great capability – and always with a smile.

Following presentations from NRCS and SWCD staffs, the evening concluded with guest speaker Bill Eldridge, CEO of MOOMilk Co. Bill provided the history of this organic dairy start-up that began when a national dairy processor "dropped" ten organic diary farmers in northern and eastern Maine in 2009. Rather than give up farming, these ten farmers joined forces with a handful of supportive, community-focused investors to try and preserve their traditional dairy heritage and, in 2010, MOOMilk was born. It has not been an easy haul, but MOOMilk now numbers 12 farms and can be found in Hannaford, Whole Foods, and many smaller groceries and markets throughout the Northeast. The company measures its success, not by corporate profits, but by how many small organic dairy farms it can save, bring into being, and support by building a strong local market for fresh, organic dairy products.